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### November 29, 1984 Lecture by Edward Lansdale

Cecil B. Currey

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Side 1, Recorded November 29, 1984, page 1---Edward G. Lansdale

L: Now this is early in the morning for me at my greatly advanced age, since 1908, that's a long time. But I would like to talk to you a little bit and then shut up and let you ask some questions and so on. And I think I will start with something in the Philippines that has, has some echoes today in Nicaragua and El Salvador and over in the Soviet borders and several other places in the world. And had echoes in Viet Nam when I went there. But we had a fight against Communist guerillas just after World War II there, and I got involved with it, got involved with the man who became Secretary of National Defense over there, Ramon Magsaysay. And we licked the problem. The Communist guerillas had a military leadership and their Chief of Staff or their active Commander in the field, their combat man, had a fancy title; he was called the Supremo. And the Huks Supremo was a country boy who had gone through high school, but hadn't got much further. He had fought against the Japanese forces and then up against the Philippine forces, and was being very successful when I came back there and try and help them in 1950. And we defeated him, he came in and surrendered and was eventually pardoned by the government, and is part of Marcos' government in the Philippines today. But in 1976 when you were out at Leavenworth; I went out there to give a lecture, and the faculty and the student body out there were telling me, I just missed Luis Taruc, had come over to the United States and he had given a lecture, including how he beat me and how I beat him over there. I'm sorry I missed that; it would have fascinated me. I went after the students very hard to find out what he said. They didn't have it on tape. I wish they had taped it. But I would have really liked to have known the guy I was trying to defeat all the time and what worried him and what made him happy and so forth, to give me some clues to what I did



L: right and what I did wrong. What I thought was brilliant might have been a stupid mistake, you know, and I had never caught on. It would have been a good education. But one of the students there when I was talking and trying to find out said that, he asked him, what was the one thing that made you folks fail, his guerillas. And he said, well, the Army or the government...the Army started making it very difficult for us at night; you never knew where they were. They would keep coming after us all the time. So we finally just got worn out and had to give up. Well, my own...I don't think he thought deeply enough about why or how we had defeated him. But I thought myself in the thing that we took the revolution away from these people, who were trying to have a revolution. They were fighting what they called a peoples' war, and we took the people away from them. And we were very successful in stopping them. Today, oddly enough, there is a new Communist guerilla force in the Philippines, they call the New Peoples' Army, and some of their leaders, they are mostly city boys from the state university, the University of the Philippines, and they are much like you: they have gone up into the hills to fight against the government and against Marcos and push a program of their own. But the only thing that makes me hopeful, all these youngsters feel that they are ten times as smart as the old Huks were and they are doing the same things, and I ...I hope somebody on the government's side remembers what...what we did in the old days and it will come back to them and maybe it will do it. So far the Philippine Army, unfortunately, is behaving the way we did in Viet Nam, and that's wrong. You don't run guerilla wars out there. They are behaving the way we are teaching others in Salvador and other places. I'm afraid we're giving the wrong advice to the Nicaraguans who are in opposition to the Contras there (illegible) to the Sandinistas. We don't



L: understand revolution, and yet we are a country that was born in a revolution. So we all are antecedents of revolutionaries, and if we would ever stop and think a little bit about where we come from and what we know instinctively in our veins and in the family and so forth and going back in history and reading a little bit, why it would start coming clearer on what could be the strength that we could make use of. In the Philippines, I came back in 1950 after I had been there...I left there in '48 and was asked back by the President of the Philippines to help their intelligence, the Philippine military intelligence get good against the Huks. I discovered...principally he had asked for help because he never knew when they were going to attack the palace/<sup>where</sup>he was staying, and he would have armoured cars up...outside of his bedroom to protect him and beat off enemy attacks. They never got that far, but he was afraid of that. And maybe Taruc was thinking, you know... he was in the same position up in the mountains when the Army came against him. But the military were misbehaving. The main purpose, they thought, of the guy with a gun was to go out and shoot people. Now people meant the enemy and anybody standing next to the enemy and anybody that was in the neighborhood and that meant villagers and the people in the...and the Huks were following Mao's dictum of getting close to the people and doing political work, getting the people to support them, and when the troops would go out and misbehave around villagers, the Communist guerillas would say, see, that's ...they aren't your friends; they are enemies of all of us, and we'll help you; the only way to get ahead in this world is to join us and pick up a rifle, too, and we'll kill the enemy. And I talked to people coming in by bus from the provinces into a place like Manila. They said there would be checkpoints manned by troops along the highway. And I remember the daughter of the Colonel



L: who was the G-2 of the Philippine Army, was telling me...she said, she was crying, she said, these troops got all the passengers off and started checking them, and they beat up on two kids that were on the bus with her, friends of hers, and she said, it's terrible. And I said, what did they do? She said, well, they didn't move fast enough. The troops wanted them off the bus fast to be searched and they just weren't moving fast enough. So this was a military that essentially saw themselves as being apart from the people. Well, one of the things that we did was to move the troops in closer to the people. We started with discipline, but also when...in getting them to act in ways to help the people. We started something called Civic Action, which is part of the U.S. Army and U.S. military operations now. That was really a device that we used in the Philippines. I invented the name...I had to teach what to do and they said, what do you call it? So I started thinking a name up with that name as an activity, that the troops would do. And it's amazing now to see it in all the U.S. forces which this was meant originally for the Philippine forces. But we also extended that a great deal and got the Army in helping the farmers go to Peoples' Court to fight land claims. In the past, tenant farmers had had a lot of trouble going up against landlords, who would come to these Courts with their lawyers and outtalk the poor farmer, who would stand there with their hat in their hand trying to get some justice for his claims, and never understand what the lawyers were arguing about, just get beaten down by it. So our Judge Advocate in the Philippine Army got his Judge Advocate lawyers to go to these Peoples' Courts and be the free counsel of farmers cases. And we started changing the outlook of the government towards the people, so much so that eventually we got into running decent elections,



L: That was another thing that a recruiting drive on the Communist side was that the government cheated in the last election and hadn't...had robbed the people of their vote. So the Communists had a slogan of boycotting elections, that you couldn't win an election and that you didn't get your man to win. And I remember going up country and seeing a friend of mine who was in the last election, and I said, is it true that they are cheating? And he said, well, I'll put it this way, he said, they either robbed me of my vote last time or my poor old mother; he said, I was running for a seat and we both voted, but they only gave me one vote. And he said, I know I'd vote for myself, I did that, but I'm sure my old, my poor old gray-haired mother would vote for me, too. They wouldn't give her a vote, so I guess he cheated, see. But this is the feeling in the...throughout the Philippines. So we used the Army to backstop the Commission on Elections and make sure that there was a decent, honest election. And that was in 1951 in the bye election. And the President of the Philippines, Quirino, was in Spain visiting when we did that and came back just the day before elections, and he tried to change everything. I was in the Chief of Staff's office and he got some direct order...he stood at attention at his desk there and said, yes, sir, no sir, and I knew either God was talking to him or the President and the President was trying to get him to move troops out of some precincts in critical districts, and he didn't do it. And he said, no sir, the Commission on Elections asked me to do that and I'm going to go ahead and do that, and it's legal and it's the right thing for the Army to do. And so when he hung up, he said, that was...I said, I know, congratulations; I shook his hand, I said you did the right thing. He said, can I get a job tomorrow. The President will probably kick me out as Chief of Staff. And I said, yeah, you'll have a job, and you'll have a place in this country. Well, an amazing



L:     thing happened: the opposition won. The candidates won in all the places, so it obviously wasn't the government cheating of the administration, the in's cheating, but the out's had gotten a chance and a decent...the people gave the credit to the Army of giving their government back to them again, and it suddenly became a government of the people, by the people, for the people again. And the Communists were trying to get the people to go against the government, and the Army and the people said, that's our government, you know, and we're not going to do it (illegible phrase). But the funniest thing that happened, I went up right after election day, the next day, up into the...where the Huk country is, was the most fighting in Central Luzon, up on Pampanga at this point, and when a convoy was stopped with troops, they would get down to relieve themselves from the trucks and some of them would still be up there manning machine guns and so forth, keeping an eye out as guard for the train on the thing, and the men would stand over to the side of the road and upzip their pants and so forth as the usual type of thing, and this was near a village. And I saw this convoy stopped and the men hop off, and the villagers saw them and all of a sudden the troops were the heroes; they didn't know it at that time. And these guys were all standing there and then they got embarrassed; all the girls and the women from the village came running out and hugged them and kissed them and so forth and they were giggling around like this....and I got....we've got it made from here on, it's clear sailing. We've got a victory in the making. And this sort of thing is what I wished Taruc would have explained, because we turned them from '51, that election, we turned around, the Huks had to leave off all their usual haunts and they...we drove them back into remote areas up in the mountains and went after them there, and just kept on going. And that's when it became hard, sleeping at nights for them and so on. But the real victory took place in a



L: way that wasn't military at all. There were three or four Filipinos who were working closely together in there, and they came over to Viet Nam later when I went over there and were helping me there and trying to help the Vietnamese Army do this thing, but the Vietnamese Army had been trained by the French and...in a modern, western Army way of fighting guerillas, and I don't think that they ever learned how to fight the guerillas that they were up against. They tried very hard; some of them knew, a few of them, and some of the Americans knew over there and they had gotten experience, but it used to break our heart everyday to see what would happen and the mistakes made and the things going wrong. But I was very fortunate in being included into a spot where I had to learn, and fortunately there wasn't a lot of attention being put on it so there wasn't a journalist with space in American papers looking over my shoulder all the time, and to say, oh, don't do that or what a stupid move that is and so forth. So we could make mistakes and do better next time and so forth and teach ourselves what's happening. And it's one of the few wins our side ever had. The British and Malaysians won but British and Malaya used to come over to see the great things that we were doing, and it surprised me that the little things we used to do in Viet Nam would be all over Asia and down in Malaya where the British were fighting and China and Japan would start getting inquiries about it. The war was going on in Korea and, thank God, that kept all the military brass and everything looking at Korea and not at what we were doing. And it also made them deny us equipment, and the Philippine Army would have a Christmas catalog sort of, of U.S. equipment to ask for; the Navy would always ask for a submarine, you know, you need a submarine against guerilla forces up in the mountains, you know, that's great stuff. We would have to say no and we had to do it on the cheek and on our own and with our own wits, much as the way that the guerillas did.



L: And it worked. We had, going down to fundamentals and principles that really worked. Well, listen, I was just going to talk for a moment so...when I start, I can't stop. So I'll stop for a minute and see if you have got questions and so forth that I can answer. Yeah?

Q: When you were talking, you said that we made mistakes, you know in dealing with...

L: Please list them...I'm not going to.

Q: Well, what could we have done right, not list them, but what were some of the things that...

L: Oh, I see, I see. Well, let me tell you one thing that...we are a technical nation, and we love our equipment. When you are commanding men and particularly in the Army and in the Infantry, you try to use your equipment to cut down your losses, you are commanding, and you are very apt to use your high power weapons, artillery, and keep the enemy at a distance and punish them. So one of the things is, you get in where you start...let's say you are going along a road and you start getting to some weapons' fire on your convoy or your troops walking along the road. The commander's first thought is to get some weapons against that fire right away and if he has artillery, he's going to use it. Now, we used to do that in Viet Nam, use artillery, and then finally we got to really harassing fire against locations and not knowing the targets, but just picking places and firing at will. The enemy would go and...he had a form of psychological judo. He would go into a village and teach the people how to make slit trenches under their beds or next to their shacks and so forth, and teach them that we were their enemies. We'd be walking along the road, the Americans and the Vietnamese Army were going to try to kill these people. So when that happens, get down



L: in these slit trenches and get your children there and try and stay safe until the firing is over. With that, they would wait until the troops were going along the road nearby the village and open fire on them. Well the villagers couldn't go out and say, gee, these are five guys that came in last night; they don't belong here and so forth; they aren't part of us. And they couldn't stop them, but here on the road instead of going and sending troops in to find out what was really going on, you open up with artillery, and what you've done, you've made a whole bunch of people, hundreds of people hate you and be afraid of you, that you are the enemy. You try and kill innocent people, including children, by staying at a distance and firing. I remember a very fine U.S. Army officer I first met down in Indonesia, and he was an Attache there, an Army Attache, but he was very close to some of the Indonesian Army leaders, and I thought, gee, what an unusual guy he was. He went into one of the General's houses and the General's kids saw him, and here was a big, tall American, they were climbing up him like he was a hill or something, when he came to the door and hugging and everything. He was really welcome in this house. And he introduced me to most of the top brass in the Indonesian Army and I got a lot accomplished in a couple of hours, more than many days of work otherwise, just because of his introductions. But he came up to Viet Nam and was given a command, given one star in Viet Nam, and commanded a brigade that was just outside of Saigon. And during the Tet offensive he went in and covered one district that my team and I had worked with the people living in the district to take them away from politically supporting the other side and coming over to our side. And it was a poor, working class neighborhood. Well, some of the enemy had gotten into this neighborhood, District 8 of Saigon and so on, and he was sent in to clean up the enemy, District 8, a few of them were,



L: The people in District 8, he didn't know that they were very loyal to our side, came up and tried to explain to the Americans that there are a few of the enemy in here; we will show you where they are...and they told it...told him and his men that. And he didn't believe them. He said that was a scrawny looking place and everything, so he brought in artillery and blasted all these houses down. Well, we had spent two years teaching these people, you can have a start in life. We gave them some places out in the mud flats outside of town along the river. And we taught them how to dry mud by (illigible) it up and letting it dry out in the sun and building foundations, and building their own shacks there. So whether the shacks looked awful or not, they were all these people had and they were proud that they had gotten a little ahead where they were. And then we started a lot of self-...cottage industries in there and let them start earning some money on their own. They were getting some pride. And when the enemy had come in before that, a lot of them were relatives or sons or friends of theirs; these people used to yell at them to quit; you're on the wrong side, come on over and be with us, come home. And the enemy was afraid to let the troops ever to come close, except during the Tet offensive they were supposed to take the city of Saigon, and they came in to do it. And there were just a couple of them who were strangers really to these people, were in the house, and the American artillery destroyed all these houses. Well, during the fighting, I sent my team down there to see what help we could get, and the people told my folks who had worked with them very closely, to never show up again. They hated Americans, all Americans, from then on. And my team came back and they were trying to report to me, and they were crying. These were grown men, you know, and they'd worked two years getting these people to the place...and I went down to a meeting from that and Westmoreland



L: was in it, it was an Ambassadors' meeting, a country team meeting, and Westie was telling how his forces were pushing the enemy out,...and you've loused up one district, you know, and I'm just going to speak up for the people there. You are doing it wrong. And Ambassador Bunker said, I don't know whether you ought to speak right now. Looking at your picture, so damn mad, you know, you are red in the face and you're yelling at him. You really want to yell at somebody in this meeting? I said, yeah, I got to get it out of my system. So I did. And later on I saw this Brigadeer who was commanding there, whom I had known down in Indonesia. I was up on the Hill testifying for the Senate and he was in for the same hearing. And I came in and he was talking with senators and saw me, and he just stopped talking, and he leaned over, and he said, yeah, I owe you one good kick in the pants for me. He said, I did the wrong thing there in District 8. And he said, I heard how mad you got at General Westmoreland and all the Army for doing the wrong thing. He said, go ahead and kick me. I said, no, I can't do it in front of the Senate, you know, like this. And then the Senator said, what is all this... what sort of jokes do you military men have among yourselves? I said, well, this is a very personal war for some of us, you know, we got involved in it... I hope I answered the question. I had my...way around the hill on the thing. Yeah?

Q: Can you tell me what happened to the Taylor report in 1961?

L: Uh, I don't know. I went over it with Taylor and when I came back, Taylor wanted us to all go in and talk with President Kennedy. He said that President Kennedy wanted....

SIDE 2

Well, my daughters at home will want to hear about this meeting in the Oval Office, so he promptly got in the rocking chair and was going back and forth.



L: And President Kennedy came in and he tried to get out of his rocking chair and it caught him in the hips and he was bringing the whole chair up, so he had to pull the chair loose and let the President come in and sit down. But, he asked us to finish up the report, and there were recommendations that Rostow and Taylor were going to work on further, and so were the rest of us. But Kennedy asked me to get apart from the others and wait, that he wanted to say something to me. So what it was, he wanted me to go to work on some Cuban problems and had nothing to do with Viet Nam. And I'm sorry I ever got mixed up in those Cuban things. I've been highly critical about the Bay of Pigs and the way the U.S. had gone about things, and I tried to introduce some revolutionary tactics there, but the U.S. had in mind commando raids for Cuba and had never gotten it out of their heads that that was the way to fight a revolution, was through a commando raid. I couldn't disabuse them of that. But they had forgotten the American Revolution and how revolutions are fought psychologically and with political input. So I wasn't very succesful. Yeah?

Q: Who was it that usually...like in the Cubans...who was it wanted the commando raids? Was it the military or was it the ...

L: No, the military was by and large critical of the raid there at the Bay of Pigs, and yet the Joint Chiefs had been in on it, and one section of the Joint Chiefs...and afterward in the review, they were trying to determine what happened. And they were sure that somebody in that building, and they would look at me as if, somebody you know, and I said, my friends, I got out of the country when this thing was formed for a reason. I knew that the thing was going to fail, you were going to turn around, you were the guys with egg on your face and you were going to wipe it off and say somebody else has egg



L: on their face and you are going to point to me, and I wasn't even present. I got the hell out of here, I went to Viet Nam. And I wrote a report and in '60, early '61 when the whole thing was planned, and insisted on bringing in the Joint Staff and the Joint Staff section to be the military input on the thing. And they didn't catch on themselves that they didn't have enough to run a, a, really an amphibious operation. It was too little. It was too ambitious for CIA to do. Now there were some military men in CIA whose idea it was, but none of them were experienced in amphibian operations, and initially there was a thought of doing what Castro had done, was go up in the hills and get some of the people, including those that had been with Castro, to fight the Castro government. And that I went with. And as soon as they started talking an across the beach operation and holding ground as they hit the beaches and so forth, I said, you can't do that in a country where the Army and everything is as alert as they are there, and we are going to get clobbered. And they got me out of those meetings. They said, please don't talk that way. This is a policy meeting. I said, well, in policy meetings you have got to get very honest, and you should have talk. And incidentally, that isn't allowed; you can't talk very plainly. I'll change the subject a little and give you a comment right now. And please don't ever quote me on this. But I thought it a very strange thing...I was an Assistant to the Secretary of Defense, and appointed, and the only military man who was. And used to watch the Chiefs of Staff and the Joint Chiefs talk in the Pentagon and to each other, and then see them up before the President. And when Viet Nam was developing and everything, they would talk very big in the Pentagon and then usually the Chairman would go up and talk with the President and some of the National Security Council people or in Cabinet meetings, and usually when he



L: got up there, the President would say something and the Chief of Staff would say, yes, sir, or no, sir, if he wanted a no. And he was very polite and correct. And then he would go back and he would report to the other Chiefs, this is what the President wants, he wants us to do. And they said, well Chief didn't you tell him this, that we had discussed before and everything. I did but this is his decision he made. Well, he didn't ever say...you know, well, we considered this and here's some things to think of. And it used to get them because when I'd be present at some of these meetings and the President would ask me and I'd tell him point blank. And they'd come to me in great shock; you said no to the President; you said that couldn't be done and so forth. I said, this is what any citizen has to do when he gets up to the top guy, he needs ...he's not an expert on this, he figures that I am or at least have some knowledge of it, and this is the time to be honest, before people go out and get killed and so forth trying to do the right thing for the United States. And I never understood...some of those people, when I talk that way, guys would think I'm a hot air artist and everything, but I did things like that that shocked them apparently. And they were trying to explain away my attitudes and so forth, that weren't normal. But I hope and trust that when you get, later in life when you get up to positions where you are called in by the top brass and so forth, whether it's civilian or military, that you will be honest yourself. You have yourself to live with and you don't have to live with all those other people. But your own inside feelings and everything are the thing that you have to live with easily, and I urge that you tell the truth, too, at that time. Well, got another question?

Q: Why didn't you have the same control over the Viet Nam situation as...  
Philippines...(illegible)



L: I did originally. I was...and not quite as much but almost; that's a good question, incidentally. It's one that gives me nightmares once in awhile, and I wake up and worry about it. Initially the French were pulling out of Viet Nam. They had been defeated at Dien Bien Phu and had accepted defeat at Geneva, and we finally got a French-American military mission put together in Viet Nam, working with the Vietnamese Army; it was called FRIEND. And I had the pacification division of that group: Army, Navy, Air Force in pacification divisions. And each of the divisions had a chief officer of one nation and an executive of the other nation, so I was Chief of the pacification division. I had a French Colonel as my Executive, and then our staff was in both nations. But we, we got the Vietnamese Army to start behaving themselves and doing very, very well, and I thought that they were really learning how to do it. They were very reluctant to do such things as civic action to behave themselves, to even drive the roads carefully. We gave...we had contests, driving contests for the Vietnamese Army. I remember before one of our operations we had a big ceremony and awarded the...gave some awards to the best drivers. And they met in the town plaza and the military band was there and played and the troops came up and got their decorations, got back into their trucks. And a great mob of the locals, villagers, had gotten there, and they took off, right through these mobs, and kids were yelling, the women were grabbing chicks and everything up out of the way, and they broke all the rules of safe driving with the new medals, I Am The Best Driver In The Outfit, on and going right through...and so the lessons I don't think were ever really learned but...it was great fun getting a medal, but when they got them, went right on.....but...and in some of our big pacification operations the behavior of the troops changed and they, they learned themselves what...one of them was up in central Viet Nam, the last



L: big one, and they...the...under the Geneva Accords the enemy was withdrawing to the north through a port of embarkation, while we were trying to take over the area that they were getting out of. And the troop commander believed very much in what we were trying to do and he, insisting on the troops obeying...and so initially they were doing it under the orders, under the duress of their officers forcing them to....get into it and ask to rebuild a market place or the public buildings were down and so forth or a bridge would be broken and they'd, put temporary repair. And the enemy in retreating were telling the people about the Vietnamese Army and describing them; they came in and ate little children for breakfast and so forth; terrible people and watch out for them, they rape all the girls, and so trying to get them very much against the Army. But the word of what the Army was doing and how it was behaving and trying to help the people got out ahead of the Army, and by the second day of the operation, the people in these towns were coming out and greeting the Vietnamese Army. After the...then it was the Viet Minh for the Communist forces left to go down to their port of embarkation and our side came along, the people were out bringing water to the troops, throwing flowers for them; they were heroes to the people. And these guys liked playing the hero, you know, so about the second and third day they were all saying, hey, that building over there needs some help, you know, and asking their captain's permission or their lieutenant to go over and work on things and everything. And by the...it took roughly ten days to the port of embarkation, and the...by the time the Communists got down there to go aboard Polish liberty ships, which were U.S. made and they had never been painted and everything by the Communists and were rusty old hulks there, to go north. But the Communist troops going aboard were trying to kidnap the younger people, the 12 years old,



L: 13 and 14 year olds, to go north and be trained by them to be infiltrators later back down south. And the people were throwing rocks at them and hated them. And they said, get out of here. And the...they were turning around and bucking the Philippine Army coming in because they behaved so well. And all their propoganda and everything just failed them. And I remember I had a man with the forces down...I sent one adviser in, a First Lt., were roughly two divisions, troops in an operation, and he stayed with the Commander and he and the Commander were close friends and everybody took that very amiss. I remember General O'Daniel saying, do you think that's enough? And I said, the Commander, the Vietnamese Commander, listens to them; they are close friends, they are sharing a tent together on this march. And I said, you don't need more than one guy get in the place and that's good enough. And I'm in touch with him by radio everyday all along, time of the day. But he let me know about the people throwing rocks at the Communist troops. So I went up to see Ngo Dinh Diem, who was the Chief of State at that time, and I said, why don't you go on up there (illigible) was where they were going out. I said, you go up there and after the Communists leave, just reestablish your government up there. And he said, well, should I? I hear the Communists have turned the people against us. I said, no, just the reverse is happening. They are throwing rocks at them, the Communist troops leaving. And the French were very critical of Diem and very critical of me and so forth. But I talked them into getting some of their top French military brass and some of the Paris mass correspondents and some of the other correspondents from metropolitan France to go up there and witness it. And Diem wanted me to go. I said, no, we shouldn't have a lot of Americans around this. It is up to you and let the French witness Vietnamese running Vietnamese affairs. So he went up there, and



L: I have pictures at home of this: the Vietnamese crowded around this Ngo Dinh Diem, whom we had said was a remote, mandarin type of a guy, a little roly-poly guy, and they lifted him up on their shoulders and were carrying him around, and I can see...this picture, all these people and men and women there and the mob are cheering this guy and with great big happy smiles on their faces as they are doing it. And the French came back. This French General saw him and he said, I am one of the guys that used to say they made a terrible mistake ever putting Diem in to run this country, but he said going up and seeing this, he said, I wouldn't have believed it unless I'd seen it with my own eyes. And later on when the Americans started talking so against Diem, I'd show them this picture: do you recognize him? They'd say, that's Diem. I'd say, yeah, these are the people you say hate him and everything; look at their faces and you can just see on this. And we'd never handled it correctly...

C: Let's take a ten minute break.

Q: ...and also, why does the U.S. continue to buy oil (illegible)...

L: Ah, boy, that's a double edged question. Would you like to answer it?

Q: I know what my opinion is. I want to hear what yours is.

L: Yeah. Uh, I don't know how large a net he has of terrorists, but I doubt that it's that organized, and maybe he himself wouldn't know. I know that he, he is the type who funds such things. He's got a tremendous ego and gets enthusiasm for doing this, and a person like that isn't always keeping track of his own actions and so forth, which I suspect, he isn't. He's listening to voices, give approval, whether these terrorists (illegible) say, yes, boss, I'll go do it, or the aides around him saying, that's a smart move that you just made and so forth. That's what he's paying attention to really, and salving his own ego on the thing. Why we do business, I don't know. We shoot



L: down his aircraft and say, you're a good business man, we do business with...I don't know what the rationale is for such a thing. I like a world simpler than the one we live in. I like rules simpler. If you are against somebody and want them to stop, why not be an enemy and stop him, or at least get him out of doing wrong and so forth and believe in a thing strongly enough to do so. I can't really answer you. Yeah?

Q: I wonder if you could go over how this Phoenix program evolved. In your opinion (illegible)...successful?

L: Yeah. The Phoenix program was essentially Bill Colby's, and Bill Colby was the CIA Station Chief in Viet Nam for quite a time, and later came back in pacification and took it up again. And it was later on that the Phoenix program was really, was most effective when he came back again. But his thought was that he was looking at the political structure of the Vietnamese Communists, and he was quite correct in wanting to counter that. And he was trying to set up a program to encourage the Vietnamese people to go out and get after the political leadership on the other side, which is out in the villages very hard for police or government officials or Vietnamese military to ever catch on who these guys were. They looked just like the other citizens to them. (illegible) put a price on the head of the, of these people and encouraged people to start weeding them out. Now, he wasn't out after just killing off all the other people. He has been highly criticized for his Phoenix program, for trying to set up a program to turn the Vietnamese against each other and just kill off a lot of people. And the critics say, he was getting people that had grudges against the, each other in the villages to give them a license to go out and kill somebody that they didn't like, in a personal, feud type of thing. It wasn't that. It was...ended up with most of the political cadre who kept the enemy really going in the peoples war in



L: South Viet Nam, getting shot. There was some cadre with the troops, who were political cadre, but they were responsible to the Politburo in Hanoi and were part of the military chain of command, were different from the political cadre in the villages. And it was a...he was fighting a real war in the Phoenix program. My feel on the thing was that it was too American. It wasn't Vietnamese enough. The Vietnamese have a distrust of foreigners, very violent in the French days, but the Communists were fighting the French, but most of the people were against the French themselves. So it was very lonely to be a Frenchman out in Viet Nam. The Americans came in, we were round eyes, we looked differently from the people. They didn't trust us, nor did they trust officials from a distant city, out in the villages. It was a fear of foreigners that was at work. And when we put in programs, which we did many of our programs were made by Americans and sold to the Vietnamese to do, but with Americans supervising or advising and furnishing the funds and so forth, keeping them going. And Phoenix was one of those. So when the Americans left, the program ended. And the Americans that ran that never understood that all the good that they did was good up until they took a plane to go home again: boom, it ended like that. And when we got out of Viet Nam, our forces and our people, support groups and everything, many of the programs that we were pushing just either stopped or weren't done correctly or the Vietnamese lost interest and didn't do it; they worked their own; these were the things that the Americans wanted and they weren't being done for the Vietnamese own good. They didn't...they do now, after the defeat there in Viet Nam, some of them are taking a look back to see what happened. And some of them who are friends of mine come in and say, gee, what happened, I didn't know you guys were as confused as we were, you know. We went home as victors and left you there to get a licking, and those are hard



L: words for them to take, but it's the truth. And we ought to be ashamed of ourselves for what we did to them, but of course we can't really be because the Americans at home were afflicted too on this thing, and we as a nation were splitting because we didn't understand the nature of the conflict that we were in. I think our government made a mistake in not teaching a little, explain to the people why we were there and what we were trying to do, and we may be doing less than we ever did. I wish we'd done later what I used to do, We'd have a problem, I'd send an adviser to be with the Vietnamese and do it and say, let them do it, and if they make mistakes, they might learn by it, and get close enough to them so they'll admit their mistakes and we can talk about it. And we used to do that, but instead the military would have advisers at all levels, so many advisers that all the orders given would have to be translated into Vietnamese and everything, and they were American orders. And how do you expect men to go out and fight and die for a bunch of foreigners in their own country against their own people. They knew we were sort of right on the things that we said and they wanted to do the right things, but we were foreigners and in a country where foreigners are those dirty guys that you never listen to, very strange. And I used to invite some of the Americans around my house and have parties there. And they would come and they'd say, this is the only place you can sit down and really talk to Vietnamese as people, in my house, And yet, they were advisers to the Vietnamese, they talked to them all the time. And the Vietnamese families would come in and I'd say, why don't you bring your wives and your daughters other places. I don't see them around the other American homes. And they said, do you see the way they are looking at our women all the time. And, well, I didn't...I didn't see that but evidently we're very lecherous group of men, far from home, you know, and our own womenkind, in a foreign population to work with them, and I guess there was a lot of misbehavior. But



L: many times the leadership for the other side came to my house and admit they didn't have the answer for something and wanted to look for it, and they wouldn't do that with the other Americans. And it was good because I could say, well, we make mistakes like that too and this is the way we did it once when we made a mistake and we discovered this.....